

# SUANN COURTRIGHT HAMMERSMITH

## CAREER OBJECTIVE

**Executive Leadership & Management**, where my skills in verbal and written communication, fund development, project/process development and implementation, and community relations will benefit an organization

## EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

2001 Masters in Nonprofit Management, Regis University, Denver, CO  
1998-2000 Graduate studies in Nonprofit Leadership and Administration, Western Michigan University, Public Administration Program, Kalamazoo, MI  
1985-Present Webinars, workshops, and independent study in nonprofit management, marketing, public relations, grantsmanship, training, leadership, fundraising, and board development.  
1972 B.A. Degree, English & Education, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI  
CERTIFICATIONS: BoardSource Certified Governance Consultant (2018); Certified Fund Raising Executive (2008); Association of Fund Raising Professionals Faculty Trainer (2008); Certified Senior Advisor (2006)

## EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Present **President, Better Philanthropy, LLC – Consulting**  
Present **President & CEO Emeritus, Lenawee Community Foundation, Tecumseh, Michigan**  
7/00-7/20 **President & CEO, Lenawee Community Foundation, Tecumseh, Michigan.**  
Accomplishments: Co-founded the Foundation, establishing board governance, policies, procedures, programs, and strategic planning processes; Managed operations, including human resources, budgeting, grants and contracts, and facility; Established communication programs, including written communications/reporting, public speaking, and media connections;. Developed annual workplans, and community outreach; Achieved and maintained national certification by the Council on Foundations; Increased assets from \$0 to \$30 million & raised \$38 million; Established programs and engaged community members in grant making, volunteering, youth leadership, literacy, and hunger relief; Developed and taught workshops to strengthen nonprofits.  
2/90-9/04 **Executive Director, Lenawee United Way & Volunteer Center, Adrian, Michigan.**  
Accomplishments: Raised over \$17 million; Developed a Volunteer Center; Initiated excellent community, media, and agency relations; Produced annual reports, brochures, videos, fundraising materials, and Board and Agency Relations Manuals; Initiated newspaper columns; Developed strategic planning processes; Coordinated Community Summits; Researched and wrote Lenawee County Environmental Scans utilizing census and other data; Facilitated Leadership Lenawee and Lenawee Youth Leadership; Developed the Lenawee Youth Council; Initiated service and agency assessment models; Conducted youth asset survey and asset development community initiative.  
9/84-1/90 **Executive Director, Cystic Fibrosis Foundation of Northwestern Ohio, Toledo, Ohio.**  
Accomplishments: Raised over \$1 million; Conducted numerous special events; Developed marketing materials and media relations; Expanded public education, patient service, and volunteer programs.  
9/83-6/84 **Director of Development and Public Relations, Cardinal Stritch High, Oregon, Ohio.**  
Accomplishments: Established an alumni organization; Developed marketing plan and materials; Achieved a 129% increase in student fund raising.  
2/83-6/83 **Interim Development Office Assignment, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.**  
Accomplishments: Verified accounts and records of \$23 million fund drive; Deposited funds.  
9/72-1/83 **Small Business Manager; Writer/Public Relations; Tutor and Substitute Teacher**

### **VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE FROM 1990-2020**

Athena Lenawee Board and Marketing Committee; Lenawee Human Services Council Executive Board, Training Committee and Treasurer; Adrian Rotary Club Past President and Board Member; Zonta of Lenawee Past President and Board Member; Big Sister with Big Brothers Big Sisters; Lenawee Chamber of Commerce Board; United Way of America Mid-America Regional Council; National Academy for Volunteerism Trainer; United Way of America Small Cities Training Task Force; United Way of America Retirees Mentor and Planned Giving Facilitator; Michigan Volunteerism Super Conference Planning Committee; Trainer for and Board Member of the Michigan Association of United Ways; President of Toledo Agency Directors Association; United Way of Greater Toledo Voluntary Action Center Management Assistance and Community Training Institute Committees; Volunteer Venture Ohio; local FEMA Board Chair; Lenawee Health Planning Task Force; Collaborative Community Planning Board of Lenawee; Adrian Inter-Club Council President; Action for Children & Teens Coordinator; Gleaner Life Insurance Society Board Member for 20 years, including terms as Chair of the Board, Vice Chair, Chair of Governance and By-Law Committees, and President of a local lodge.

**AWARDS:** Amelia Earhart Award for pioneering spirit from Zonta International of Lenawee; Laura Haviland Award for contributions to the field of human services from the Lenawee Human Services Council; Athena Award.

### **TRAINING & FACILITATION EXPERIENCE**

Graduate of the Planned Change Institute, a nine-month course in facilitation, consulting, & strategic planning, Ann Arbor, 1999

**LEADERSHIP:** Redesigned and co-facilitated Leadership Lenawee for the Lenawee Chamber for three years; Taught Introduction to United Way course for new Executive Directors; Redesigned and co-facilitated Lenawee Youth Leadership 2001-2017; Developed and co-facilitated Siena Heights University Student Leadership Program, 2005, designed to be student-led in subsequent years.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING:** Worked with Adrian Community Preschool, Branch County United Way, Lenawee Community Mental Health Authority Consumer Advisory Council, Croswell Opera House, City of Adrian Downtown Development Authority, Lenawee County Sheriff Department, Zonta International of Lenawee, Siena Heights University Division of Student Development, Family Counseling & Children's Services, and Adrian Center for the Arts.

**BOARD DEVELOPMENT:** Conducted several workshops for United Way Executive Directors and/or Board members at Michigan, Ohio, multi-state, and national conferences; Developed Board Mentoring program; Assisted numerous organizations with Rules of Operation or Bylaws; Developed Board Policies and Board Manuals for several nonprofits; Developed and taught board workshops.

**FUNDRAISING & GRANTMAKING:** Expertise in annual fundraising, special events, and major gifts; Developed processes for distribution of funds or grants; Empowered and engaged youth in grant making process; Developed and taught fundraising workshops.

**COLLABORATION:** Facilitated Village of Blissfield Retreats for the Council & Boards, and City of Tecumseh Departments & Council meetings; Responsible for several county-wide summits in various issue areas; Established ACT (Action for Children & Teens) Collaborative; Served on planning committees for several trainings for human service providers.

References Available Upon Request

## Suann Courtright Hammersmith

October 12, 2020

RE: Executive Director Job Posting

Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission  
C/O Michigan Department of State

Dear Members of the Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission:

I was intrigued to learn about the Executive Director position through a Michigan Nonprofit Association posting. How exciting it would be to be part of this groundbreaking initiative for Michigan!

As a life-long community builder, I am passionate about participating in the democratic process, whether by voting faithfully, participating in a grassroots effort to prevent a nuclear waste facility from locating in my area, or encouraging people to vote. I would love to be part of this groundbreaking initiative to help assure that the process and result are the best possible.

My leadership and management experience and abilities, plus personal qualities are detailed in the attached resume, supplemental questions, and letters of reference. If given the opportunity, I would serve with the highest standards of excellence, integrity, and commitment to nonpartisanship, while facilitating this work in partnership with the Commission.

Thank you for your consideration for the Executive Director position. I look forward to hearing from you, hopefully regarding an opportunity for an interview.

Sincerely,

*Suann Courtright Hammersmith*

Suann Courtright Hammersmith



Encl.

1. How many years of experience do you have working in Michigan state government and/or public sector administration?

- 10 or more years

2. Describe your experience working in an executive level position.

I have served as the executive director of three nonprofits since 1984 – a chapter of a national health charity, a United Way and a community foundation. During my tenure I have always enjoyed motivating and collaborating with a board of directors, as well as other diverse volunteers and community members. I find it incredibly fulfilling to build strong organizational foundations, and to assist others in achieving their goals by providing data and context, plus helpful processes and implementation options. While I'm comfortable being a spokesperson, I am quick to give credit to others for their contributions. My experience includes all aspects of management, including human resources, budgeting and financial management, resource development, communications, policy and process development, project implementation, and more. My resume provides additional detail.

3. How many years of experience do you have managing staff?

- 10 or more years

4. Describe your leadership approach and explain how you have implemented this approach in your current/previous position(s).

My leadership approach includes a servant mindset, keen listening skills, and respect for others and the views they hold. I work diligently to achieve collaboration, consensus in decision-making, and a greater good for all, while accomplishing the goals at hand. Integrity, effective communication, and transparency guide everything I do. During my twenty-year tenure at my most recent position, I was blessed to work with board members, staff, community members, and volunteers, who partnered with the Foundation to build this organization from the ground up. With board members, we were a team, raising over \$600,000 this Spring to fight COVID-19, developing policies to assure financial and organizational accountability, and assuring the mission was carried out. Staff were never asked to do anything I wouldn't do; we worked together to increase internal capacity, conduct effective public relations, and invite others to partner with us to build a better community. Volunteers were treated as important members of our efforts. While working diligently, we radiated enthusiasm and had a lot of fun along the way. Three letters of reference provide additional information about my leadership skills.

5. Do you have experience in accounting, developing and executing a budget, or public reporting?

I have a good understanding of accounting, and have developed and adhered to budgets for the nonprofits where I've worked. A component of all grants requires budgeting and reporting to assure income and expenditures comply with the grant requirements. Public reporting experience includes publishing annual reports, planning and hosting annual meetings, and ongoing communications with stakeholders. Additionally, I have served as lead staff to work with external auditors.

6. Are you familiar with the Open Meetings Act?

Yes, I am familiar with the Open Meetings Act, and would lead by example, complying with this Act.



P.O. Box 951  
Adrian, MI 49221  
517 759-3005  
adriancenterforthearts.org

June 30, 2020

To whom it may concern:

The Adrian Center for the Arts highly endorses the work of Suann Hammersmith.


Sue helped our organization through a strategic planning process, the first in our history. We had many minds coming together to try and forge our future path. Sue had great empathy for all participants. She was a master in keeping us on task and still allowing for some digression at different points in the conversation.

The end result was a document that the organization can live by and periodically update as the circumstances change. What it does do is keep us focused on our mission (which we updated during this planning time) and give us the opportunity to make our decisions based on our mission and the focus of the plan.

As the CEO of the Lenawee Community Foundation, Sue has positioned the organization and our community for the future. The Lenawee community is better because of the programs Sue and her team have implemented and funded.

Know that Suann is highly focused, highly qualified and highly organized as a presenter, group discussion leader and information gatherer.

Sincerely,

  
Lisa Neuman  
Executive Director

**Adrian Center  
for the Arts  
Board of Trustees**

**Kenneth Thompson**  
*President*

**Kris Schmidt**  
*Vice President*

**Michael Jacobitz**  
*Treasurer*

**Paula Trentman**  
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**Erik Gable**

**Paula Holtz**

**Jim Philp**

**Theresa Rupley**

**Lisa Neuman**  
*Executive Director*

**Pi Benio**  
*Programming Director*



January 10, 2020

Board of Directors

*Vince Brainerd,  
President*

*Bill Southard,  
Vice-president*

*Kari Brogan,  
Secretary*

*Tom Lewis,  
Treasurer*

*Katie Frye*

*Jo Gaugier*

To whom it may concern,

It is with pleasure that I offer Suann Hammersmith a recommendation and wish her well in future consultation endeavors.

Suann's assistance has been invaluable to me in numerous ways. In 2015, I visited Lenawee Community Foundation to learn more about local philanthropic efforts and how to start a donor advised fund. She listened to my ideas, guided me to a practical solution, then cheered me on, as the fund grew and worthwhile projects were selected.

As a newcomer to the area, Sue also helped me learn about Lenawee County. When I accepted a position as Executive Director at The Daily Bread, a struggling soup kitchen and food pantry in Adrian, she invited me to apply through the Foundation grants process and participate in a series of classes designed to market non-profit organizations effectively and keep practices legal. The assistance Sue and her staff offered was instrumental in saving this vital organization.

I have been impressed by Sue's professionalism and admirable personal qualities. She is a service-oriented and generous individual, as well as a creative problem solver with a tireless work ethic. No matter a person's background, Sue is continuously observed treating others with compassion, respect and understanding.

Highly conscientious in the planning, organization and follow through of events and projects, Sue can deliver proactive solutions in difficult or stressful situations. This results in positive customer response, greater donor retention and an increasingly loyal base. Her passion and commitment for the Lenawee Community Foundation are legendary. With Sue's positive attitude, leadership and management skills, the Foundation has flourished. During her twenty-year tenure, it has become a \$30 million operation with five full-time staff members.

I am confident that Sue will be a tremendous asset to those utilizing her consultation expertise to improve their non-profit organization. Feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] for further information.

Janie Colton  
Executive Director





June 25, 2020

To Whom it May Concern:

I am honored to offer a letter of reference for Suann Hammersmith, who I have known for 30 years. I first worked with Suann in connection with United Way, when I served as the campaign chair, on the Board of Directors, and in other volunteer capacities. Currently, I serve on the Board of Directors and chair the Development Committee of the Lenawee Community Foundation.

While Suann was Executive Director of Lenawee United Way, the annual campaign increased by 130% with more than \$17 million raised. She also coordinated community summits, developed the organization's strategic planning process, co-facilitated Leadership Lenawee, and researched and wrote the county environmental scan, among many other contributions to our community.

In the last four years of her tenure with United Way, Suann also served as part-time Executive Director for the Lenawee Community Foundation. Subsequently, she became the first President & CEO of Lenawee Community Foundation, raising over \$38 million, awarding more than \$24 million in grants, and leading the Foundation in accumulating \$30 million in assets. She has assisted many nonprofits with management assistance and strategic planning, as well as provided workshops for agency staff and board members in fund development, board governance, finance, and nonprofit management. When COVID-19 struck, she sprang into action, awarding the first round of grants by March 23, and to date orchestrating the raising of over \$600,000.

Suann is the consummate professional. She is so highly respected that the Foundation board has honored her as President & CEO Emeritus. She is passionate about her work and her community. She is a good listener and a thoughtful person.

I have always felt valued, as a Board Member, by Suann. She thoroughly researches any issues and provides the information the board needs to make good decisions. I have always received meeting notifications and materials well in advance. She is a skilled facilitator and effective communicator. She brings high energy, a sense of humor, and servant leadership to her work.

Above all, Suann is honest, ethical, and authentic. In addition to receiving her outstanding skills and abilities, anyone choosing to hire Suann will surely benefit from working with one of the finest persons with whom I've had the opportunity to work.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of Richard A. Gurdjian.

Richard A. Gurdjian, CLU, ChFC